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Scorching weather helps wheat crop

By Vera Sloan and Kevin Bottrell
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The hot, dry weather predicted throughout the week comes as good news to rain-soaked wheat farmers.

The Kansas Agricultural Statistics report reports that farmers averaged only 2.9 days suitable for field work across the state last week, with only one in northwest Kansas, due to moderate to heavy rain.

However, the National Weather Service is predicting dry weather with temperatures in the mid to high 90s this week. Brian Olsen, area agronomist with Kansas State University Research and Extension, said many wheat growers would be test cutting some early-planted wheat by the end of the week, with full harvesting underway by next week.

"This week will do wonders," Olsen said of the expected hot weather.

Despite some recent hail damage, the wheat crop is still looking good, he said.

Last week, the statistics report rated 42 percent of the state's crop as being good, with 7 percent rated excellent.

"I think we're going to have some pretty good yields," Olsen said.

The corn crop is also faring well, the report said, 50 percent good and 16 percent as excellent so far. Some corn and wheat in the Colby area suffered hail damage from storms last week, however.

The moisture has delayed planting of summer crops. Sorghum planting is 57 percent complete across the state, 24

percent is emerged and 76 percent is considered to be good, with none being considered as very poor and only 2 percent poor.

Eighty percent of the soybeans are planted in northwest Kansas, 51 percent are emerged, and there was no report on the condition of the newly emerged crop.

Topsoil conditions in northwest Kansas show only 3 percent to be short of moisture, 89 percent is adequate and a 47 percent surplus in some areas.

The subsoil moisture report showed that there are no areas in the northwest that report a very short supply of subsoil moisture. Just 3 percent is considered to be short of rain, with 89 percent adequate and 8 percent surplus.

The week ending June 14 showed every county in the state, except Leavenworth, Marshall and Wyandotte, as having at least some rain.



Flyers hold mini-air show

The Colby RC Flyers held an air show north of Colby on Saturday and Sunday. Flyers Robert Dible and Dave Backus (right) instructed Keegan Morgan on how to fly one of the remote control planes with a dual control system, allowing Dible to take the wheel at any time. Shaun Gilbert of Rexford brought one of two remote control helicopters to the show (below).



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

City reminds citizens to keep signs off power poles

By Andy Heintz
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Think twice before taping signs to utility poles or driving stakes into the ground on street corners to promote your garage sale.

City officials warn that it's illegal to put any advertisement on city property.

Colby City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the municipal code makes it illegal for people

to post garage-sale notices – or most anything else – on utility poles or street rights-of-way. They must be placed on private property.

She said this rule is broken more often this time of year because everyone is having their garage sales. Usually, she said, the city just asks the owner to take them down. That avoids having them become trash after the sale is over.

"We've had more signs taped to utility poles

and/or stuck in stakes along the side of the street," said Armstrong. "While people are good at putting signs up all over town, they are not always good at taking the signs down, even when they are asked to."

Many people don't know it's illegal to put signs on public property, she said. They just feel like it's a good way to promote their garage sale, the manager said, but if the problem continues, the city could start issuing fines.

Coalition asks for money for area grants

By Vera Sloan
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Saying its programs are helping more and more area kids stay away from tobacco, drugs and alcohol, the Thomas County Coalition is asking for the county's liquor tax revenue so it can expand its efforts.

Sue Evans, executive director of the Regional Prevention Center of Northwest Kansas, spoke to the Thomas County commissioners last week about the effort.

"We came to let you know what success we are having," she said, "and to ask the county to consider allocating the Thomas County liquor tax funds to the coalition to use for substance abuse prevention."

She explained that the tax money would be put into two funds, two-thirds of it in a pass-through fund for grants in the budget year, and one third of it into an endow-

ment to raise money for future programs.

"We plan to use the Thomas County Community Foundation as the fiscal agent, to provide transparency and accountability," Evans said.

Nonprofit organizations, government agencies, religious organizations or schools can apply for grants from the coalition, she said. To qualify, the events or projects must be in Thomas County and related to substance abuse prevention.

Law enforcement officers, parents, school teachers and administrators and youth formed the coalition in 1996 to combat substance alcohol and tobacco and abuse, Evans said. The coalition uses multimedia campaigns and prevention programs and promotes compliance checks and responsible alcohol sales to try to increase awareness of substance

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Midwest banks say economy mending

OMAHA (AP) — A new survey of rural bankers in 11 Midwest and Plains states suggests the region's economy remains weak, but the bankers believe the worst of the recession has passed.

The Rural Mainstreet survey's overall index remained in negative territory in June, slipping to 34 from May's 36.2. The survey, which indicates the economic health of smaller towns and rural areas, has an index that ranges between 0 and 100. Any score below 50 suggests a contracting economy over the next three to six months and any score above 50 indicates a growing economy over that time.

Creighton University economics Professor Ernie Goss said weaker farm income, closures and cutbacks for rural manufacturers and a weak U.S. economy continue to drag on the region's economy. However, the overall index has improved significantly since setting a record low of 16.9 in February.

Goss and Bill McQuillan, chief

executive officer of City National Bank in Greeley, Neb., created the survey, which covers Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and Wyoming.

The survey's confidence index, which reflects what the bankers expect six months from now, offers some hope. It declined to 52.2 in June from May's 56, but that index remains in positive territory.

"Bankers in our survey clearly think that the worst of the economic downturn is behind us," Goss said.

The survey suggests the farm sector remains under pressure because of the recession, but the figures did show some improvement. The farmland price index increased to 45.7 in June from May's 39.2. The farm equipment sales index improved to 33.3 in June from May's 28.3.

Rural hiring remained weak in June, with the hiring index de-

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Briefly

Picnic in the Park Wednesday

This week's entertainment at Picnic in the Park will be the Bugbee Sisters. The series continues at noon every Wednesday through July 29 in Fike Park. For information, call the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401 or the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

Food delivery this weekend

Prairie Land Food delivery will be from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday at the Sacred Heart School Gym, 1150 W. Sixth St. For questions, call Gene Griffin at 460-3579 or State Farm at 462-7525.

College pool open weekdays

The Colby Community College indoor swimming pool is open to the public for lap swimming from 5 to 7 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Open swimming is 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Cost for

general admission is \$3. Monthly and yearly passes are available. Call Kipp Nelson at 460-5476 for information.

Camp set for Tuesdays

The Colby Wesleyan Church is offering "Tuesdays @ 10," a free summer day camp for children 4 to 12. Kids are invited to participate in the food, fun, games and God's love from 10 a.m. to noon every Tuesday through July 28. This year's "Son Rock Camp" will include nature hikes and outdoor activities with lunch. To register, or for questions, call the church office at 462-8391.

Church holding Bible study

The Colby Wesleyan Church will offer a 12-week Beth Moore Bible study, "Daniel: Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy," from at 6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Aug. 19 at the Pioneer Memorial Library's community room. No homework is required

and discussion will focus around the videos. For information, call the church at 462-8391.

Nursing home plans dog show

The Colby Care Center will hold a doggie fashion show at 2 p.m. Saturday, July 11. Dress up your dogs and bring them by, along with a \$5 donation for the Residents Activity Fund. Veterinarian Tammy Swarts will judge the entries and award prizes, and give some free advice for dog owners. For information, call Amanda Hillis at 462-6721.

Groups offer free shoot

The Colby Trap Hunting Heritage Group and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will hold another free shooting program for youths and inexperienced shooters at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, July 19. Shooters will learn weapons handling and range safety. Shotguns and shells will be provided at the Colby Trap Club at County Road R (West College Drive)

and County Road 14, one mile south of U.S. 24 west of Colby. For information, call Wildlife Conservation Officer Benny Young at 462-7602.

City to spray for mosquitoes

The City of Colby is fogging for mosquitoes every week. On Mondays or Tuesdays, crews will fog from Webster Street south. On Thursdays or Fridays, they work from Webster north. The crews need your help, though: check your yards and empty anything that holds stagnant water – such as cans, swimming pools, tires and the like – to help keep the mosquito population down. For information, call the Public Works Department at 460-4420.

